

President William J. Clinton



RECIPIENT OF THE 2005 JIMMY AND
ROSALYNN CARTER AWARD FOR
HUMANITARIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO
THE HEALTH OF HUMANKIND

Bill Clinton has been committed to battling the HIV/AIDS epidemic, even before he was elected President. As a candidate in 1991, he repeatedly called for all-out efforts to “turn back the tide of AIDS.”

Since leaving the White House, President Clinton has continued his efforts to combat AIDS, focusing on bringing large-scale care and treatment programs to developing countries. The Clinton Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative, established in 2002, has become a major player in the global effort to expand access to care and treatment in the developing world. In acknowledgement of this work, Bill Clinton has been named this year’s recipient of The Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Award for Humanitarian Contributions to the Health of Humankind.

During his administration, President Clinton pushed for increased funding for AIDS research and speedier Food and Drug Administration approval of AIDS drugs. From 1995 to 1997, the nation increased its investment in combating HIV and AIDS by sixty percent; eight new AIDS drugs and nineteen others for AIDS-related conditions were approved; and the death rate from AIDS dropped significantly. AIDS in the United States was becoming a manageable disease.

But in the developing world it is a different

story. HIV infects forty million people worldwide. Twenty-five million have died. In many places the epidemic is undermining social, economic, and political stability. Many countries lack both funds and the public health infrastructure needed to implement effective prevention, care, and treatment to turn the tide. In response to this challenge, President Clinton has made the HIV/AIDS Initiative a focal point of the William Jefferson Clinton Foundation: “Science has



provided us with the knowledge and tools we need to turn the tide of this pandemic. It is time for us as political leaders and citizens to put them to use. Lives that could be spared will be lost and it will be impossible for these countries to achieve their goals for social and economic development. The security of the global community is at risk.”

The Foundation has been behind efforts to develop comprehensive integrated national care, treatment, and prevention programs in over a dozen countries in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. It provides business and clinical expertise to develop operational plans that aim to dramatically



increase the numbers of patients receiving treatment by building the infrastructure and systems necessary for high-quality HIV/AIDS care and treatment. Former President Jimmy Carter has praised the impact these efforts have had on bringing HIV/AIDS care and treatment within reach of resource-poor countries: “The foundation assists health leaders in these countries in implementing modern business procedures and protocols for the management of drug storage, tracking and distribution, and information sharing.”



To ensure that programs can be sustained over the long-term, President Clinton negotiated with manufacturers of generic pharmaceuticals and five other leading manu-

facturers to dramatically reduce the cost of high quality AIDS drugs and two key diagnostic tests. The agreements reduce the current price of drugs in the developing world by one-third to one-half, including for the most commonly used triple therapy combinations. Dozens of countries have already used the agreements to procure medicines for tens of thousands of people who need them to survive.

The prices available for the diagnostic tests are up to eighty percent less than prices otherwise available on the market. In sub-Saharan Africa, the reductions represent savings of hundreds of millions of dollars over the next five years. “These



companies, world leaders in their field, deserve credit for their willingness to make AIDS tests more affordable and more available to millions of people in the developing world. They have demonstrated tremendous compassion and corporate citizenship,” President Clinton said.

The Foundation has garnered funds from outside sources, including the governments of Canada, Ireland, Norway and Sweden, to help its partner countries implement their HIV/AIDS programs. These funds go directly to the governments in support of their national care and treatment programs.

“We are systematically changing the economics of AIDS treatment in places where before now very few people have been able to receive life-saving care,” says President Clinton. “By pushing down the price of HIV/AIDS medicine and laboratory tests, we are ramping up the ability of developing countries to treat millions of people, and to do so with the kind of quality care that people with AIDS in the developed world usually receive.”

“When you leave the White House, you lose a lot of power, so you have to trade power for influence and impact,” President Clinton said in an interview with the Chronicle of Philanthropy. “You try to find the things that you care the most about, that you think are of real importance and where you think you can have an impact.” Mr. Clinton is clearly making an impact tackling the challenge of HIV/AIDS in the developing world.

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— W.J. CLINTON